

Responders get hands on animal rescue training

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By Mike McDaniel -

RAYMOND, MS (WLBT) -

When disaster strikes, it's not just people who are left in dangerous and sometimes deadly situations.

Large animals are often the center of rescue efforts and the required teamwork it takes must be just as in sync as any other rescue.

Man, woman, child or in this case a horse; if you ask Shaun Moody, a rescue mission is just that, no matter who, or what needs help.

"We need to be prepared for them," Moody said.

Moody is a first responder with the Ridgeland Fire Department and the mission is to rescue what could be a trapped horse which has fallen into a tight spot.

"When instances occur we need to be able to work together with the veterinarians, the task forces and things of that nature," Moody said.

As part of a group of first responders, from across the state, these men and women are getting hands on training in what it takes to rescue an animal more than twice their size and sometimes, one that's not so cooperative all while doing it safely and effectively.

"There are all sorts of ways that animals find themselves getting entrapped or entangled," said state veterinarian Jim Watson.

Watson says with responders working together, training will pay off, when scenes like this become a reality.

"With the infrastructure in our state related to horses and cattle and other large animals, this is timely training," said Executive Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security J.W. Ledbetter.

Ledbetter says the importance of large animal rescue really came to the forefront after Hurricane Katrina.

That combined with the amount of large animals being transported through the state puts Mississippi in a position to protect.

"Agriculture in Mississippi is considered a critical infrastructure," Ledbetter said.

"A large animal like a horse in an overturned horse trailer can be a very dangerous situation for people that aren't trained and knowledgeable about how to handle the animals, how to get the animal out of that situation," Watson said.

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